



RECORD OF COMMUNICATION

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Air Safety Investigator
Western Pacific Region

Date: April 22, 2017
Person Contacted: Mr. Christopher Wolter (Friend of CFI/Passenger)
NTSB Accident Number: WPR17FA013

Narrative:

Mr. Wolter was a close friend of the accident passenger, Mr. Renato Simone. On this date, Mr. Wolter submitted an unsolicited 4 page document regarding his observations and thoughts about Mr Simone, the accident airplane, and the accident to the NTSB. The text below are verbatim excerpts from Mr. Wolter's document.

I did not know the airplane's owner, Jim Dwulet, but my close friend Renato Simone has been my flight instructor for the past dozen years. We have flown together many times, including just five days prior to this accident. Renato was always a skillful, thorough, and detail-oriented instructor. By his reputation, and by my personal observations, I believe that if this airplane was controllable, Renato would have controlled it.

Both pilots were very experienced

Jim Dwulet's [the accident pilot /owner] Bonanza had a turbocharger conversion done prior to November 3, 2014

Wing tip fuel tanks are frequently added with turbocharger conversion.

This may involve new fuel pumps, and new wiring in the wing

Renato Simone told Chris Wolter that the wing tip tanks "were new"

At Jackson airport, Renato was last seen [by the author, on the flight prior to the accident flight] preflighting the left side and tail of aircraft

Renato had a concern about flying N365RM back to Concord [from Jackson (JAQ), where the new avionics were installed]

Beechcraft issued Safety Communique #298 about fuel leak problems/explosions

Renato always turns on the electric fuel pump when switching fuel tanks

I flew Renato Simone to the Westover/Jackson airport on October 20, 2016, so he could pick up Bonanza N364RM "for a friend". I was with him as he started his preflight inspection on the right side of the airplane. I noted the wing tip fuel tanks, and he said "those are new". He showed me the fuel tester, called "multi-sump", and demonstrated it by sumping the right wing tank. He

continued his preflight inspection, walking around the front of the airplane, past the prop, and towards the left side of the plane, with the fuel tester in his hand. It was 4:00 pm as I left him, walked over to my airplane, climbed in, and took off back towards Concord airport less than 5 minutes later. After I arrived at Concord, I looked at my iPhone, and saw a time-stamped "missed call" from Renato at 4:04 pm. At about 4:45 pm, as I was preparing to push my plane back into its hangar, Renato walked up to get his car, which he had parked inside. I asked him about the "missed call" on my phone, and he said he tried to call me to say, "Don't take off yet, I may need to fly back to Concord with you." (I didn't hear the call come in because I was already on my takeoff roll.) He didn't elaborate about the reason, but he must have noticed something about the Bonanza that gave him second thoughts about flying it. At 4:04 pm, he was probably still pre-flighting the left side of the Bonanza.

The airplane was flying a straight-line course of approximately 080 degrees (eastbound) towards Brentwood. Renato and I have flown that exact course towards Brentwood in the past. That is because the flat and sparsely populated area of the Delta is a good place to practice flight maneuvers. Renato and I have practiced Biannual Flight Review ("BFR") maneuvers there in the past, and it would be a particularly good place to become familiar with new avionics.

Jim Dwulet [the accident airplane pilot/owner] had a turbocharger ("Tornado Alley Turbo") installed several years ago. He reported problems with this turbo on "Beech Talk" bulletin board in November 2014. ". . . **I have had nothing but problems with my TA conversion !!! Terrible customer service and two "crappy " rebuilds. On my third and still runs awful... about to toss it in . . . JD"**

On Thursday, October 20, 2016, I flew Renato to Westover Airport [JAQ] in my Trinidad airplane, so he could pick up N364RM for "a pilot friend" and fly it back to Concord. After landing, we walked to the avionics dealer's office. He and the secretary tried to reach her boss/supervisor, because Renato had some questions or concerns about some things. I was standing 10 feet away, so I didn't really hear whether they were discussing paperwork, billing, or the work that was done. I don't think he reached the person that he really wanted to talk to, but he eventually talked with someone else. I don't know what his questions were, or whether they were answered to his satisfaction.

While we were there, Renato asked a technician to look at my Trinidad to see about installing the same avionics equipment in my airplane. There was some discussion about where to fit some of the equipment, and I showed the technician where other equipment was installed in the plane's tail section. I remember him telling Renato that there wasn't much room for the wiring, (or possibly some other problem), but the technician said something like possibly running it under the floor, and "I can make it work". I wasn't paying much attention, because they were the experts, discussing the fine details, and I trusted that Renato would see that it was done right. The technician made some notes, and was going to get back to Renato with a proposal for my airplane.

When Renato was ready to fly N364RM back to Concord, I watched him begin his preflight inspection. As he started "sumping" the fuel tanks to check the fuel, he showed me the new "Multi-sump" device that was in the Bonanza. We had discussed that I'd take off first in my slower Trinidad, and he would follow in the Bonanza, so we would both arrive at Concord at about the same time. (This was important because Renato's car was still parked inside my hangar.) As Renato walked around to the left side of the Bonanza, he continued his preflight inspection, I

walked to my Trinidad, and took off about 5 minutes later, expecting him to be right behind me. After landing at Concord, I noticed that there was a "missed call" on my iPhone from Renato. He tried calling me at 4:04 pm, which was about the same time I was taking off from Westover, so I didn't hear my phone ring.

After Renato arrived back at Concord, he met me at my hangar, and I asked him about the missed call on my phone. He said that he was calling to tell me to wait there at Westover for a while, because there was some sort of issue with N364RM. He said that he might want to fly back to Concord with me, in my plane, and leave N364RM there at Westover. I don't remember what he said the problem was, but it must have been significant enough that he was thinking about leaving the plane there at Westover. I don't know if it involved paperwork, billing, the logbook, the avionics installation, starting the airplane, or something else. He must have resolved it within a few minutes, because he ended up flying N364RM back to Concord after all, without incident.

He must have arrived at Concord shortly after I did, because he dropped N364RM off at Concord Jet, and got a ride from someone to my hangar before I had even pushed my plane back inside. Now, I wonder if the problem he noticed at Westover [JAQ] still persisted, and if it was severe enough to cause the plane to crash less than one flight hour after leaving Westover